

R 111608Z MAR 09
FM USMISSION GENEVA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8117
INFO AMEMBASSY DHAKA
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS

UNCLAS GENEVA 000204

STATE FOR PRM/ANE, EAP/MLS
BANGKOK FOR REFCOORD

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PREF](#) [PHUM](#) [TH](#) [BM](#)
SUBJECT: ROHINGYA: UNHCR TO PUSH REGIONAL APPROACH WITH
THAILAND

REF: A. STATE 17836
[¶](#)B. EMAIL HOPKINS-HILGERT/MULREAN (FEBRUARY 27 2009)
[¶](#)C. BANGKOK 595

[¶](#)1. Pascale Moreau, Deputy Director, Asia Bureau, told Refugee Officer that UNHCR is working closely with Thailand and other ASEAN governments to address the situation with the Rohingya boat people. Moreau said that UNHCR is trying to convince governments not to deport Rohingya as a first response. UNHCR is also working with the government of Thailand in its capacity as the ASEAN Chair to promote dialogue on the Rohingya through the Bali Process. Moreau said that Thailand has added this topic to the agenda of the next meeting in Bali on April 15 and that UNHCR will also participate in the meeting.

[¶](#)2. Janet Lim, UNHCR's Asia Bureau Director, told governments attending the UNHCR Standing Committee meeting in Geneva March 3-5, that UNHCR is "promoting a comprehensive regional approach" to the Rohingya situation in cooperation with governments in the region through the Bali process. Thailand, in its response to the Standing Committee, denied allegations that it had mistreated the boat people and asserted its right to enforce Thai immigration laws humanely. Thailand blamed the Rohingya outflux on the poor Burmese economy and networks of "unscrupulous traffickers." With that out of the way, Thailand commended UNHCR for its regional approach and reported that Thailand had already reached out to affected countries during various meetings in Bangkok, Brisbane and Bali to promote cooperation. Thailand concluded by urging UNHCR to mobilize resources for sustainable livelihoods in Burma's Northern Rakhine State. The U.S. delegation expressed its support and encouragement to UNHCR for its efforts in our statement to the Standing Committee.

STORELLA